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The Nebraska Bird Review

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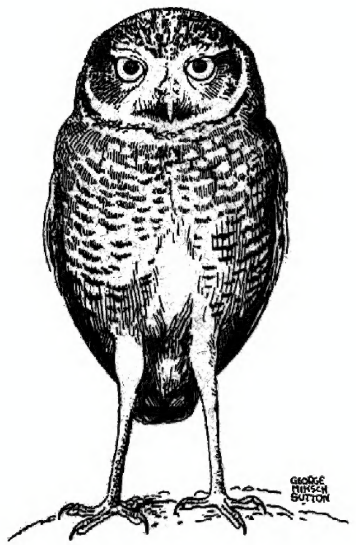
Volume 88 December 2020 Number 4



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FALL FIELD REPORT, August-November 2020

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INTRODUCTION

Two issues were of concern this fall, and both appeared to have consequences or at least similarities in Nebraska. A major die-off in New Mexico made national news: https://www.aba.org/the-data-behind-mysterious-bird-deaths-in-new-mexico/. On Sep 9, 2020, the temperature dropped from 96°F to 40°F in the Albuquerque area, a record low, winds reached 70 mph, and several inches of snow fell, killing large numbers of birds directly. Over the next few days, hundreds more dead birds were picked up. Some have linked this high mortality to birds displaced from the mountains due to fire and unfortunately being caught in the severe weather. While fire effects may have contributed, the parsimonious explanation was thought to be starvation and dehydration in the region where the die-off occurred as a result of a concurrent drastic drop in insect numbers; most carcasses had no fat and some showed muscle atrophy.

In Nebraska, we may have experienced similar effects. Probably due to the same weather system, numbers of mosquitos dropped drastically in mid-Sep at least in Lincoln, Lancaster County (John Carlini, Shari Schwartz, Esa Jarvi) and nearby northwestern Missouri (Paula Hoppe); numbers of dead Barn Swallows were found at the same time.

This fall, a remarkable phenomenon was the many record and near-record high counts of generally common birds in the west and southwest; it is tempting to relate these high numbers of birds to the extensive fires to the west in the Rocky Mountains. Birds that normally migrate in eastern parts of the Rockies may have been pushed eastward: possible examples are the single observer/single location counts of 50 Pygmy Nuthatches, 26 Cassin's Finches, **470** Pine Siskins, 18-20 Lesser Goldfinches, 71 Yellow Warblers, and 84 Wilson's Warblers. Of course, one would expect such an event to bring mountain birds as well, but there was no significant influx of mountain specialties like Steller's Jay and Clark's Nutcracker although both put in appearances. Curiously, however, at Chadron State Park, Bird Conservancy of the Rockies bander Robert Snowden reported the lowest capture rate in 13 years. Maybe the explanation is simple: extensive coverage of the southwest by Steve Mlodinow and other experienced visiting observers.

There was much more to contemplate this fall, in several categories: high numbers of birds, high numbers of reports, early and late occurrences, species out of range, a miscellany section, and of course a plethora of rarities.

Startlingly high numbers included a record 28,500 Cackling Geese, 417 Wood Ducks on one pond, 59 Sage Thrashers overall including 19 at one location, the afore-mentioned 470 Pine Siskins, 61 Field Sparrows in the west, 255 White-crowned Sparrows, 60 Lincoln's Sparrows, 71 Yellow Warblers, and 84 Wilson's Warblers.

Numbers of reports for certain species were impressive; eight Red-necked Grebes were at six locations, there were 16 reports of Hammond's Flycatcher, 17 Mountain Chickadees were found east to North Platte, there were 11 westerly reports of Winter Wren compared to the prior 15, and there were seven reports of westerly Blackpoll Warblers, normally rare in fall even in the east, compared to the prior nine westerly reports. And it was a "major flight year" for Northern Saw-whet Owls.

Most early/late occurrences of note recently have been of fall lingerers; this fall notable were late Oct reports of Black-necked Stilt and Summer Tanager, and late Nov reports of American Woodcock, White-faced Ibis, and Nelson's Sparrow.

Often as rare as low-digit state records are birds displaced east or west of their usual ranges. First Panhandle records were made by Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Sedge Wren in fall, and Connecticut Warbler, while an amazing western bird east was a Brewer's Sparrow in Lancaster County, first for over 100 years away from the Panhandle. Additional westerly reports were of American Black Duck, Philadelphia Vireo, Mourning Warbler, and Blackpoll Warbler, while easterly were a Red-naped Sapsucker, Cassin's Vireos, Plumbeous Vireos, and a Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler.

The miscellany included subspecies discussion for Hermit Thrush and Song Sparrow in the west, unusual hybrids between Northern Pintail and Green-winged Teal and between Neotropic and Double-crested Cormorants, a possible developing trend of late-nesting Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks, and a good dispersal of Carolina Wrens similar to that of 2019.

And finally, an amazing list of rarities, led by 2nd state records of Fulvous Whistling-Duck and Magnificent Frigatebird (identified to species), 4th Reddish Egret, 5th Yellow-billed Loon (pending NOURC), 5th and 6th Anna's Hummingbirds, 6th Arctic Tern, 8th Harris's Hawk, and 9th and 10th Gray Flycatchers.

All of these topics are covered in more detail in the following species accounts - read on and enjoy!

ABBREVIATIONS

BCR: Bird Conservancy of the Rockies
BOL: Branched Oak Lake SRA, *Lancaster*
CBC: Christmas Bird Count
CBL: Capitol Beach Lake, *Lancaster*
CLNWR: Crescent L NWR, *Garden*
CSP: Chadron SP, *Dawes*
FF: Fontenelle Forest, *Sarpy*
GPD: Gavins Point Dam, *Cedar* and *Knox*
ICSP: Indian Cave SP, *Nemaha* and *Richardson*
LM: Lake McConaughy, *Keith*
LNB: Lakes North and Babcock, *Platte*
LO: Lake Ogallala, *Keith*

LSWNP: Lincoln Saline Wetlands Nature Park, Lincoln, *Lancaster*
m.ob.: many observers
MWCW: Marsh Wren Community Wetlands, Lincoln, *Lancaster*
NGPC: Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
NOURC: Nebraska Ornithologists' Union Records Committee
NWR: National Wildlife Refuge
OR: Oliver Reservoir SRA, *Kimball*
PL: Pawnee Lake SRA, *Lancaster*
RA: Recreation Area
RCSRA: Rock Creek SRA, *Dundy*
RWB: Rainwater Basin, including several south-central and southeastern playa basins
SBC: Sowbelly Canyon, *Sioux*
SCP: Spring Creek Prairie, *Lancaster*
SHP: State Historical Park
SP: State Park
SR: Sutherland Reservoir, *Lincoln*
SRA: State Recreation Area
WHNC: Wildcat Hills NC, *Scotts Bluff*
WMA: (State) Wildlife Management Area
WP: Wilderness Park, *Lancaster*
WPA: (Federal) Waterfowl Production Area
WTP: Water Treatment Plant

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Ian Wiist (IW)
Nathan Wilhite (NW)
Crinda Jackson Williams (CJW)
Michael Willison (MW)
Elizabeth Winter (EW)
Lucy Winter (LW)
Chris Wood (CW)

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck: A trend is emerging of fall nesting in the state (JGJ); the three nesting reports to date are in Aug-Sep, suggesting birds dispersing northward in summer may nest or even re-nest if water conditions are suitable. The second nesting record with tangible evidence was of a female that laid 11 eggs in a Wood Duck nest box in *Cass* around 15 Aug, leaving with the three ducklings that hatched on 14 Sep (LKr fide MR photo, JGJ). A brood of conspicuously marked ducklings seen well at close range in *Butler* 31 Aug (MWa fide TJW) may have been of this species.

Fulvous Whistling-Duck: An extraordinary record in terms of species, date, and location was of one shot by a hunter at Clear Creek WMA in *Keith* 28 Oct (BKi, MWi photos, fide JGJ). There was no indication the bird had escaped from captivity. This is the 2nd state record, following the first in summer 2018.

Snow Goose: A good fall count was the 116,000 over *Nuckolls* 25 Nov (DE). Fewer occur in the west; best count was 3100 at Lake Minatare, *Scotts Bluff* 20 Nov (SM).

Ross's Goose: A record high fall count was the 3000 over *Nuckolls* 25 Nov, estimated as 3% of a large white goose flock (DE). The 200 in *Dundy* 16 Nov (SM) was second-highest westerly tally on record.

Greater White-fronted Goose: Early groups of migrants were the 70 over *Sarpy* 7 Oct (L&BP) and 70 over *Lancaster* 8 Oct (OD, SBn). Rare in the Panhandle, three were at Lake Minatare, *Scotts Bluff* 22 Nov (SM, CW) and one at Scottsbluff WTP, *Scotts Bluff* 22 Nov (CW, SM).

Cackling Goose: An estimated 28,500 (95% of 30,000 white-cheeked geese) were at Lake Minatare, *Scotts Bluff* 20 Nov (SM), by far a record fall number. A good count was the 3500 at Scottsbluff WTP, *Scotts Bluff* 22 Nov (SM, CW).

Canada Goose: There were six reports in the east 21 Oct-30 Nov of up to 25 of the "*canadensis*" group (SMa, photos) as designated by eBird, which includes subspecies *Branta canadensis interior* and *B. c. parvipes* that occur in Nebraska. Given the easterly locations of these sightings, subspecies *B. c. interior* is most likely.

Mute Swan: The only report was of two of the managed group at Yanney Park, *Buffalo* 30 Oct (KM, EJu).

Trumpeter Swan: Potentially local breeders were a family group of seven at Hackberry Creek WMA, *Antelope* 14 Sep (WF). Arrival at non-breeding locations was early; a surprising 72 were in *Lincoln* 27 Oct (BE) and also early were seven in *Saunders* 31 Oct (CCr).

Tundra Swan: Unexpected were two early adults and a juvenile at Lonergan Lake, *Douglas* 1-15 Nov (SMa, m. ob.); also early were two at Valley, *Douglas* 11 Nov (JR). Four near Valentine, *Cherry* 30 Nov (PR photo) were a bit tardy.

Wood Duck: An amazing concentration of 417 was near Neligh, *Antelope* 20 Oct (MB video) and paling by comparison was another good tally, the 118 at a *Butler* wetland 28 Aug (LE).

Blue-winged Teal: One in *Burt* 25 Nov (SMa) was tardy.

Cinnamon Teal: Documentation of sightings in Sep and later have been few, but this fall photos and descriptions based on large bills and plain, red-tinged facial feathering provided the following later records: two at Lake Minatare, *Scotts Bluff* 5 Sep (MBe), and singles at Scotts Bluff WTP, *Scotts Bluff* 19 Sep and 6 Oct (SM), and one in *Lincoln* 13 Oct (SM).

Northern Shoveler: Routine reports.

Gadwall: Routine reports.

American Wigeon: Migration starts in early Sep, and so groups arriving earlier may be molt migrants, such as four in *Keith* 7 Aug (SM), eight in *Hall* 8 Aug (RF), and 20 at CLNWR 18 Aug (SM). This species does not breed in Nebraska and is rare in summer.

Mallard: The 100,000 at SR 18 Nov (SM) tied second-highest fall count on record.

American Black Duck: The only report was surprisingly far west: one well-described at SR 18 Nov (SM).

Northern Pintail: The 900 at SR 2 Nov (SM) was a good fall count.

Green-winged Teal: Routine reports.

Canvasback: Routine reports.

Redhead: One at Ta-ha-zouka Park, *Madison* 12-24 Sep (JTh) was an early migrant.

Ring-necked Duck: An immature male at a *Butler* wetland 12 Aug-19 Sep (LE, SMa) arrived early and lingered.

Greater Scaup: The 5-20 at Gavins Point Dam, *Cedar* and *Knox* 18-19 Oct (SMa) were early.

Lesser Scaup: This species is rare in summer, but most likely in *Garden*; up to five were in the Goose Lake area of CLNWR 18 Aug-2 Sep (SM).

Surf Scoter: One arrived early in *Buffalo* 6 Oct (AF, BB). The seasonal total of at least 26 was a near record; best tally the seven in the GPD area (SMa, CA).

White-winged Scoter: A female/immature at SR 2 Oct (SM) was earliest on record. Fewer than usual were reported, a total of five.

Black Scoter: Best count was the five at Yankee Hill Lake, *Lancaster* 25 Oct (JGJ).

Long-tailed Duck: Early were one in *Lincoln* 24 Oct (CC, BE, WB), four in *Knox* 26 Oct (MB), and one in *Buffalo* 26-28 Oct (AF, JN, m. ob.).

Bufflehead: Early arrivals were one at CLNWR 27 Sep (CP) and a pair at Smith Lake WMA, *Sheridan* 28 Sep 2020 (CP).

Common Goldeneye: Two males that summered on Lewis and Clark Lake, *Knox* and *Cedar* were still present 3 Aug (MB, EB). The 20 at OR 26 Oct (SM, DE) were early migrants.

Barrow's Goldeneye: The only reports were of 1-2 at North Platte WTP, *Lincoln* 18-26 Nov (SM, m. ob.).

Hooded Merganser: Reports would have been routine except for a doorbell security camera photo of a juvenile in Lincoln, *Lancaster* 7 Aug (fide TJW). This incident is suggestive of local breeding, for which there are few documented Nebraska records.

Common Merganser: Routine reports.

Red-breasted Merganser: Seven early at Little Lake Alice, *Scotts Bluff* 10 Oct (KD) may have been molt migrants.

Ruddy Duck: Early away from summering locations were two at OR 31 Aug (SM) and eight at DeSoto NWR, *Washington* 31 Aug (KH).

Northern Bobwhite: Routine reports.

Wild Turkey: Routine reports.

Sharp-tailed Grouse: Routine reports.

Greater Prairie-Chicken: Three were in *Deuel* 6 Sep (FS), where numbers may be increasing slowly. This species barely reaches the Panhandle.

Gray Partridge: There were three reports, of 14 in *Knox* 18 Aug (MB), two in *Cedar* 15 Aug (EB), and the first report in *Boyd* for a while, 11 along 894 Road 9 Aug (SMa).

Ring-necked Pheasant: Routine reports.

Pied-billed Grebe: Routine reports.

Horned Grebe: Routine reports.

Red-necked Grebe: This species occurs each year, usually only once, but this fall there were a surprising eight reports from six locations: 24 Oct-2 Nov BOL (MW, m. ob.), 31 Oct-2 Nov *Douglas* (SBr, JR, m. ob.), 1 Nov *Pierce* (SB), 2-27 Nov SR (SM, m. ob.), 2 Nov Lake Maloney, *Lincoln* (SM), and 18 Nov (2) LM (SRi, SM).

Eared Grebe: The 740 at CLNWR 18 Aug (SM) was a good tally.

Western Grebe: The 1730 at SR (SM) is second highest on record there for fall.

Clark's Grebe: Routine reports.

Rock (Feral) Pigeon: A flock of all-white Rock Pigeons, best count seven, was at MWCW at least 23 Aug-16 Sep (EJ, m. ob.).

Eurasian Collared-Dove: A photo of a very pale bird at Mullen, *Hooker* 8 Aug (JE) was likely an escaped Ringed Turtle-Dove rather than an African Collared-Dove ([AFRICAN COLLARED-DOVE] - Birds of Nebraska - Online (outdoornebraska.gov); the latter has entirely white undertail coverts, but proximal undertail coverts of the Mullen bird were blackish.

Ringed Turtle-Dove: See preceding species.

White-winged Dove: Reports were close to being routine, as this species is on its way to being a resident rather than merely a summer visitor. Noteworthy among the 19 reports, however, were the 12 in a yard in Ogallala, *Keith* 16 Nov (JO), and a possible family group of four in a North Platte, *Lincoln* yard 23 Aug (WB).

Mourning Dove: Two in *Brown* 30 Nov (PR) were late for the north.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Routine reports.

Black-billed Cuckoo: One in *Dundy* 30 Aug (SM) was westerly and tardy. There are very few documented Sep records, but this fall there were three, all in *Lancaster*: a juvenile 10 Sep (EJ photo, JGJ photo), an adult 12-13 Sep (MW photo, RSt photo), and a juvenile 21 Sep (LE).

Common Nighthawk: Singles at two locations in *Douglas* 14 Oct (EWi, IW) were tardy. An intriguing report was of one at Ash Hollow SHP, *Garden* 2 Sep that was brownish rather than gray and had extensively spotted under wing coverts, fitting the description of the southern Rocky Mountains subspecies *Chordeiles minor henryi* (SM photo). There have been no other reports of *C. m. henryi* since Bruner in 1904 mentioned "rufous" nighthawks on the Pine Ridge.

Common Poorwill: One found dead on a road in Ogallala, *Keith* 6 Oct (fide JGJ) was tardy. Best count was the 10 in Wildcat Hills, *Scotts Bluff* 25 Aug (SM).

Chuck-will's-widow: None were reported; fall occurrences are difficult to detect.

Whip-poor-will: One of four rather tardy birds heard at Schramm SP, *Sarpy* 19 Oct (BE, CC) was recorded.

Chimney Swift: Routine reports.

White-throated Swift: Routine reports.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: One at Lauritzen Gardens, *Douglas* 13 Oct (MC) was late.

Black-chinned Hummingbird: The three reports, all at *Scotts Bluff* feeders, were the 18th-20th for the state: a female 9-10 Aug at the Smith feeders (MS, photos), a female 24-25 Aug at the Croft feeders (CCf, SM), and an immature female in the DeLara yard 28 Aug (KD).

Anna's Hummingbird: A remarkable record was a continuing young male at the Smith feeders, *Scotts Bluff,* Nebraska's 5th, that molted to adult plumage during its 35-day stay 13 Jul-17 Aug, and, amazingly, was joined 8 Aug by an adult male (MS), Nebraska's 6th.

Calliope Hummingbird: Two at the Smith feeders, *Scotts Bluff* 1 Sep (MW) were tardy.

Rufous Hummingbird: Easterly were singles in *Nance* 9 Sep (LK), *Buffalo* the same day (JN), and in *Hall* 8 Aug (RF). Three at the Smith feeders, *Scotts Bluff* 1 Sep (MW) were tardy.

Broad-tailed Hummingbird: One in *Scotts Bluff* 1 Sep (MW) was tardy.

Virginia Rail: Late Oct-early Nov records may be tardy migrants or birds attempting to winter. Reports were of one in *Nuckolls* 24 Oct (LR, RH) and at the same place 23-24 Nov (DE) that responded to a tape, 1-2 at OR 15-19 Oct (SM, ER, MW), and two at Enders Reservoir, *Chase* 2 Nov (SM).

Sora: One at Kramper Lake, *Dakota* 2 Nov (RSk) was late.

American Coot: Routine reports.

Sandhill Crane: Intriguing were sporadic sightings of two birds at Lake Wanahoo, *Saunders* 31 Jul-1 Oct (JS, m. ob.); these sightings and similar sightings there since 2017 are suggestive of breeding, but so far no proof has been obtained. Three probable non-breeders in *Wayne* first seen 28 Jul continued through 5 Aug (EB, MB, L&BP); a similar group of two adults and a juvenile was along Airport Road, *Lincoln*, 2 Aug (BE).

Whooping Crane: Routine reports.

Black-necked Stilt: Extremely late were two near Valentine, *Cherry* 28 Oct (GW) and a juv. at North Platte WTP, *Lincoln* 1 Oct (BE photo). A group of 2 adults and four juveniles in *Clay* 16 Sep were "presumed migrants" (JGJ). The 39 at CLNWR 18 Aug (SM) was second-highest fall count on record; 18 were still there 2 Sep (SM).

American Avocet: Five lingered rather late at North Platte WTP, *Lincoln* through 6 Nov (BE, m. ob.).

Black-bellied Plover: One in *Lancaster* 9 Nov (LE) was tardy.

American Golden-Plover: Routine reports.

Killdeer: Routine reports.

Semipalmated Plover: One lingered at MWCW through 10 Oct (BN).

Piping Plover: Routine reports.

Mountain Plover: The only report lacked details but was plausible: a flock of 12 foraging in a plowed field in *Kimball* 4 Aug (BR).

Snowy Plover: Two nests, both successful, were found this summer on the delta sandbars at Lewis & Clark Lake, but both were determined to be in South Dakota (fide CH).

Upland Sandpiper: Latest on record was one overhead in *Kearney* 24 Oct identified by the distinctive flight call (LR, RH).

Long-billed Curlew: The only reports were of two on 23 Aug in *Morrill* (MSh) and one on 18 Aug in *Keith* (SM).

Marbled Godwit: One at North Platte WTP, *Lincoln* 14 Sep was tardy (BE photo).

Ruddy Turnstone: The only report was of one in *Hall* 2 Aug (RF). This species is less than annual in fall.

Stilt Sandpiper: There were two reports of late migrants; one lingered at Wagon Train RA, *Lancaster* 21 Oct-2 Nov (LE) and one was at BOL 24 Oct (MW).

Sanderling: Quite late were two at LO 20 Oct (MW) and one at BOL 25-31 Oct (MW, LE).

Dunlin: The 11 at BOL 20 Oct (LE) were early.

Baird's Sandpiper: Four at Enders Reservoir, *Chase* 2 Nov (SM) were late.

Least Sandpiper: One at BOL 9 Nov (LE) was tardy.

Buff-breasted Sandpiper: Routine reports.

Pectoral Sandpiper: Routine reports.

Semipalmated Sandpiper: One at MWCW 3-4 Oct (JH, MW) was tardy.

Western Sandpiper: Routine reports.

Short-billed Dowitcher: This species is rare in the west; a juvenile was in *Garden* 2 Sep (SM).

Long-billed Dowitcher: Routine reports.

American Woodcock: One in *Nuckolls* 26 Nov (DE, photos) was quite late. One was westerly in the *Chase/Perkins* area, shot by a hunter 31 Oct (fide JLa). A winter storm in late Oct downed several woodcocks into back yards; at least eight such birds were reported 24-26 Oct (fide JGJ, m. ob.).

Wilson's Snipe: Routine reports.

Spotted Sandpiper: One in *Cedar* 21 Oct (SB) was late.

Solitary Sandpiper: One at Pioneers Park, *Lancaster* 3-4 Oct (MW) was tardy.

Lesser Yellowlegs: Tardy were three in *Dawson* 5 Nov (AF) and one in *Cass* 6 Nov (SQ).

Willet: Routine reports.

Greater Yellowlegs: Two were late in *Scotts Bluff* 30 Nov (SM) and another in *Lincoln* 18 Nov (SM).

Wilson's Phalarope: Three in *Scotts Bluff* (KD) and one in *Dundy* (SM) 26 Sep were tardy.

Red-necked Phalarope: Rather early were the 10-25 in *Garden* 1-2 Sep (SM) and two at LM 3 Sep (SM), and a bit tardy were 14 at Swanson Reservoir, *Hitchcock* 2 Oct (AH).

Red Phalarope: Only the 18th and 19th for fall, and 21st-22nd overall, were singles at Enders Reservoir, *Chase* 12 Sep (EW photo) and North Platte WTP, *Lincoln* 20 Oct (BE, MW photos).

Sabine's Gull: An "early juvenile" was earliest on record in *Scotts Bluff* 15 Aug (SM), and tardy were singles at CBL 20 Oct (LE), and BOL 23 Oct (TG). Of an estimated 6-8 at Swanson Reservoir, *Hitchcock* 2 Oct, three were adults (AH, photos).

Bonaparte's Gull: Routine reports.

Franklin's Gull: Routine reports.

Ring-billed Gull: Routine reports.

California Gull: Early-arriving birds, likely *Laurus californicus californicus* from Colorado, were one at Lake Minatare, *Scotts Bluff* 7 Aug (SM) and possibly the same bird there 1 Sep (SM). Four different one-day singles were described at SR 13 Oct-20 Nov (SM), timing suggestive of migrating *L. c. albertaensis*.

Herring Gull: Third- and fourth-earliest adult arrivals on record were in *Scotts Bluff* 1 Sep (SM) and at LM 3 Sep (SM).

Iceland (Thayer's) Gull: Early away from *Keith* and *Lincoln* were immatures in *Knox* 23 Oct (MB) and *Douglas* 30 Oct (JR). An ad. was at SR 2 Nov (SM). A paler individual, reported as "*Laurus glaucoides thayeri/L. g. kumlieni*" was at CBL 25-27 Nov (MW photos).

Lesser Black-backed Gull: One of the summering immatures at LM remained through 7 Sep (SM, JN, SMa); 1-2 ads. (singles photographed at separate locations) were present 8 Sep (SMa). The six at LM 18 Nov (SM) was a high count for fall.

Glaucous Gull: Only one was reported, at SR 18 Nov (SM), on the early side. Numbers of this species reported in Nebraska have declined in recent years.

Great Black-backed Gull: A surprising two were reported, both ads., one at LM 20 Sep (BE photo, JN), and the other on Lewis & Clark Lake, *Knox* 14 Nov (MB). These are the 19th and 20th for fall, for a total of about 40 records for the state.

Least Tern: An ad. at Lake Minatare, *Scotts Bluff* 7 Aug (SM) was westerly.

Caspian Tern: Routine reports.

Black Tern: Routine reports.

Common Tern: Aug dates are few, but this fall there were a surprising four: 5 Aug *Chase* (BM), 7 Aug *Keith* (SM), 17 Aug *Dixon* (SL) and 21 Aug *Cedar* (GP). One at GPD 18 Oct (JL, JR, SB) was late.

Arctic Tern: Only the 3rd record for fall, 6th in all, was an imm. at Lewis & Clark Lake, *Knox* 15-21 Oct (MB, m. ob.), surprisingly joined by an adult 18-21 Oct (JN, m. ob.).

Forster's Tern: One at BOL 25 Oct (MW) was quite late. Also tardy were one at GPD in *Knox* 18 Oct (SB, m. ob.) and four there in nearby *Cedar* 19 Oct (MB).

Red-throated Loon: The only report was of one at Conestoga Lake, *Lancaster* 29 Oct-8 Nov (SK, m. ob.); it was found dead entangled in fishing line 10 Nov (SBn).

Pacific Loon: There were six reports, two of which may have been of the same rather early bird at BOL 24 Oct (MW) and PL 24-25 Oct (MW, KHa, JGJ). Elsewhere, a surprising two were at Ritz Lake, *Dodge* 26 Oct (GR, D&JP), and singles were at Lake Maloney, *Lincoln* 2 Nov (SM) and 21 Nov (SMa), and at SR 21 Nov (SMa, DL, PR). The latter two dates are a bit late.

Common Loon: Probably summering or wandering non-breeders were two in *Cedar* 24 Aug (RD) and singles in *Lincoln* 27 Aug (JNe) and at LM 3 Sep (SM). A little early was one in *Cedar* 24 Sep (MB, EB).

Yellow-billed Loon: One at SR 18-20 Nov pushed the limits of observers' cameras (SM, m. ob.). It would be Nebraska's 5th if accepted by the NOURC.

Magnificent Frigatebird: Quite remarkable for the late date was a female picked up dead in *Dawson* 11 Nov (MP). There were two late-season hurricanes that made landfall on the central Gulf Coast and that might have pushed this bird to Nebraska, along with at least two others in Colorado and Kansas at around the same time (eBird.org); Hurricane Delta was a Category 4 storm 5-10 Oct and

Hurricane Zeta a Category 2 storm 24-29 Oct. This is the second record for Nebraska identified to species; there are three others accepted as "Frigatebird sp." by NOURC.

Double-crested Cormorant: Routine reports.

Double-crested x Neotropic Cormorant (hybrid): One was photographed at CLNWR 2 Sep (SM); its bill was small and slender and it had an orange gular pouch.

Neotropic Cormorant: The only report was of one at CLNWR 18 Aug-2 Sep (SM).

American White Pelican: Routine reports.

American Bittern: One at LSWNP 23 Aug (LS) was probably an early migrant, but one in *Buffalo* 11 Aug (BB) was in potential breeding habitat.

Least Bittern: None were reported of this rare eastern fall migrant.

Great Blue Heron: Routine reports.

Great Egret: There were three tardy birds reported, singles in *Sarpy* 12 Nov (L&BP), LSWNP 13 Nov (LS), and 19 Nov in *Buffalo* (BB).

Snowy Egret: The 22 at the SR cooling pond 26 Sep (WB) was a good tally.

Little Blue Heron: The only report was accompanied by an equivocal photo.

Reddish Egret: A major rarity was one photographed 17 Aug on a Missouri River sandbar at River Mile 756 in *Dixon* (SL). This is Nebraska's 4th record.

This Reddish Egret, Nebraska's 4th, was on a sandbar at Missouri River Mile 756 in *Dixon* 17 Aug 2020, photographed by Shannon Langland.

Cattle Egret: Routine reports.
Green Heron: A late fledgling was in *Dakota* 19 Aug (BFH).
Black-crowned Night-Heron: Routine reports.
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron: None were reported; this species is less than annual after Aug.
White-faced Ibis: Tardy was one in *Lancaster* 31 Oct (JN) and 2nd-latest on record was another at a different *Lancaster* location 14 Nov (JJu). Second-highest fall tally on record was the 190 at Goose Lake, CLNWR 18 Aug (SM).
Turkey Vulture: One in *Dodge* 5 Nov (GR) was one of only seven documented records for Nov.
Osprey: One at SR 24 Nov (MM) was quite late.
Golden Eagle: Routine reports.
Northern Harrier: Routine reports.
Sharp-sinned Hawk: One in *Dawes* 22 Aug (SM) was a bit early.
Cooper's Hawk: Routine reports.
Northern Goshawk: There were two reports, an immature at Borman Bridge WMA, *Cherry* 22 Oct (GW) and an adult in *Lincoln* 23 Nov (BBJ photo, fide JGJ).
Bald Eagle: Routine reports.
Mississippi Kite: One in Omaha, *Douglas* 24 Sep (JR) was easterly and tardy. A pre-departure flock of 23 in North Platte, *Lincoln* 29 Aug (BE) was a good count.
Harris's Hawk: Only the 8th for the state, all but one in fall, was one in Omaha, *Douglas* 21 Sep (fide RS; photo); it may have been the same bird that was captured and released in Bellevue, *Sarpy* 18 Apr 2020.
Red-shouldered Hawk: There were reports of singles from 12 locations in *Lancaster, Douglas*, and *Richardson* (m. ob.); reports have increased in recent years.
Broad-winged Hawk: Westerly were singles in *Scotts Bluff* 13 Sep (SM) and *Garden* 27 Sep (CP).
Swainson's Hawk: One in *Dodge* 8 Nov (GR) was 2nd-latest on record.
Red-tailed (Krider's) Hawk: One in *Lancaster* 19 Sep (KHG) was quite early, and singles in *Cedar* (MB, EB) and *Dakota* (BFH) were merely early.
(Northern) Red-tailed Hawk: Two were photographed in *Washington* 25 Nov (SMa) of the relatively newly recognized subspecies *Buteo jamaicensis abieticola*; these are the 11th and 12th records since these Seasonal Reports have included this form. Overall dates are 13 Oct-28 Mar.
(Western) Red-tailed Hawk: Singles of subspecies *B. j. calurus/alascensis* were quite early in *Kimball* and *Scotts Bluff*, both on 15 Aug (SM). The *Scotts Bluff* bird was described as a "young rufous morph" (SM).
(Western/Northern) Red-tailed Hawk: It has recently been recognized that *B. j. abieticola* has a dark morph that is indistinguishable from dark *B. j. calurus* in the field, leading eBird to provide a reporting option for such birds as "*B. j. calurus/abieticola*". There were five reports 26 Sep-25 Nov in *Saunders*, *Burt*, and *Dodge* (SMa); earliest, 26 Sep in *Saunders,* was quite early for either subspecies.
(Harlan's) Red-tailed Hawk: Singles in *Nuckolls* 2 Oct (DE) and *Buffalo* 3 Oct (JP) were early.
Rough-legged Hawk: One in *Cherry* 10 Oct (DEb) was early.

Ferruginous Hawk: One in *Brown* 21 Sep (B&MD) was early and easterly; another was easterly in *Keya Paha* 25 Nov (CTK).

Barn Owl: One in *Dundy* 9 Oct (DTo) was tardy.

Eastern Screech-Owl: Routine reports.

Great Horned Owl: Routine reports.

Snowy Owl: None were reported; expected early arrival dates are 6-8 Nov.

Burrowing Owl: Routine reports.

Barred Owl: Routine reports.

Long-eared Owl: One in *Kimball* 26 Oct (SM, DE) was early or undetected during summer; one in *Knox* 2 Sep (MB) was most likely a local breeder.

Short-eared Owl: Routine reports.

Northern Saw-whet Owl: This fall, banding efforts by Brenner and Jorgensen of NGPC suggested this was a "major flight year", with 20 banded in 82.5 net hours 15 Oct-11 Nov at sites in *Seward* and *Lancaster*. Supporting evidence for this being an irruption year was provided by the 70+ banded at Hitchcock Nature Center in nearby *Pottawattamie*, Iowa (fide JT). Singles banded at WHNC 29 Sep and 2 Oct (VM) and East Ash Canyon, *Dawes* 1 Sep (JT, WM, ND), as well as one heard at Gilbert-Baker WMA, *Sioux* 22 Aug (SM), were likely local breeders.

Belted Kingfisher: Routine reports.

Lewis's Woodpecker: The only reports were of two at the Sowbelly Canyon, *Sioux* breeding location 22 Aug (KD), and a tardy single in Carter Canyon, *Scotts Bluff* 6 Oct (SM).

Red-headed Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Red-bellied Woodpecker: This species continues to creep slowly westward in major river valleys; the westernmost to date in the Niobrara River Valley was in *Sheridan*, at the Trail 131 crossing of the river, 17 Sep (WF).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: A westerly juvenile lingered in *Kimball* 26 Oct through the end of the period (SM). Also westerly were singles in *Perkins* 30 Sep (WF) and *Scotts Bluff* 20 Oct (SM, DE), and a surprising three in Parks, *Dundy* 10 Oct (DT).

Red-naped Sapsucker: The only report was of one late and only the 4th record east of the Panhandle at Cody Park, *Lincoln* 18 Nov (SM), continuing a recent trend of easterly fall records for this species.

Downy Woodpecker: Routine reports.

Hairy Woodpecker: In recent years, reports of the Rocky Mountains subspecies *Leuconotopicus villosus monticola*, which lacks spotting on its primary coverts ("shoulders"), have increased. This fall the 5th-8th records were of a male in Carter Canyon, *Scotts Bluff* 25 Aug (SM photo), a male there 20 Nov, joined by a second bird, another male, 30 Nov (SM, eBird.org), a female in the DeLara yard, *Scotts Bluff* 25 Oct and 15 Nov where possibly the same female has appeared every year recently (KD), and two, at least one a male, in southwest *Kimball* 13 Oct (MW, ER).

Northern Flicker: Early "red-shafted flickers" in the Panhandle, all on 31 Aug, were five in East Ash Canyon, *Dawes* 31 Aug (SBn, OD), three at CSP (SBn, OD), and one in *Kimball* (SM). One in *Antelope* 9 Sep (MB) was quite early for the easterly location.

Pileated Woodpecker: Routine reports.

American Kestrel: Routine reports.

Merlin: Westerly for the date was a *Falco columbarius columbarius* in *Dawes* 28 Nov (PR); most *F. c. columbarius* are in southeastern Nebraska Dec-Feb.

Peregrine Falcon: Away from *Sarpy, Douglas* and *Lancaster*, one in *Saline* 14 Nov (BH) was tardy. The last young bird to depart the OPPD, *Douglas*, nest site was 68/W on 14 Sep (JT), although both adults were still roosting there as of 7 Oct (SMc).

Prairie Falcon: Routine reports.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: One in *Buffalo* 1 Aug (KW) was early.

Western Wood-Pewee: The 25 at OR 29 Aug (NP, WA) was a good tally. Easternmost were two at the eastern extent of the Niobrara River Valley summer range at Fort Niobrara NWR, *Cherry* 8 Aug (DLo, JTh).

Eastern Wood-Pewee: Westernmost were three at the western extent of the Niobrara River Valley summer range at Fort Niobrara NWR, *Cherry* 8 Aug (DLo, JTh).

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: Apparently the first Panhandle record was one photographed and well-described at Gotte Park, *Kimball* 2 Sep (MW). Along with two records from *Keith*, the three westernmost records are 29 Aug-3 Sep.

Acadian Flycatcher: Reported less than annually in fall, the only report was of one calling and described at ICSP 4 Sep (JR, SBr).

Alder Flycatcher: Rarely documented in fall, calls were recorded in *Dixon* 8 Aug (SMa) and *Richardson* 16 Aug (SMa). There are very few fall records, but it may be overlooked at that time, especially westerly, where singles were heard and well-described at RCSRA 9 and 30 Aug (SM).

Willow Flycatcher: One in *Lancaster* 19 Sep (MW) was tardy.

Least Flycatcher: One in *Lancaster* 3 Aug (LS) was early, and another at LM 2 Oct (SM) was tardy.

Hammond's Flycatcher: This rather distinctive empid is proving to be at least uncommon in the Panhandle in fall. There were at least 16 reported; oddly, the only ones reported east of the Panhandle were the earliest and latest: singles in *Dundy* 30 Aug (SM) and *Keith* 20 Sep (JN).

Gray Flycatcher: There were two reports of well-described birds, singles on Old Stage Hill Road, *Scotts Bluff* 25 Aug (SM) and at Swanson Reservoir, *Hitchcock* rather late 2 Oct (AH). These are about the 9th and 10th fall records overall.

Dusky Flycatcher: Two at RCSRA 9 Aug (SM) were early, and one in *Keith* 20 Sep (JN) was tardy. In all, about 19 were reported.

Cordilleran Flycatcher: Rarely detected away from the breeding range, this fall there were six such reports 16-31 Aug, including four along White River Road, *Sioux* 22 Aug (SM) and singles in *Dundy, Cheyenne*, *Kimball*, and, away from pine habitat, in *Sioux* (SM, MSh, SB). Breeding range reports were from CSP: two on 16 Aug (SB) and one on 2 Sep (RSn).

Eastern Phoebe: Singles were tardy in *Cass* 1 Nov (JL) and *Lancaster* 29 Oct (LE). The 10 at Heron Haven, *Douglas* 10 Sep (MJ) was a record high fall tally.

Say's Phoebe: A migrant was easterly in *Seward* 12 Sep (JD), one of fewer than 20 such easterly fall records. Tardy were singles in *Garden* 11 Oct (CP) and *Thomas* 17 Oct (JPa). The seven along State Line Road, *Kimball* 29 Aug (NP, WA) was a good count.

Great Crested Flycatcher: The nine at RCSRA 9 Aug (SM) was a record high fall tally.

Cassin's Kingbird: Routine reports.

Western Kingbird: Routine reports.

Eastern Kingbird: Routine reports.

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher: A single juvenile and two more about nine miles away were the only reports, both from *Richardson* 16 Aug (SMa); breeding was not reported in *Richardson* this past summer.

Loggerhead Shrike: A good count was the seven in southwest *Kimball* 15 Aug (SM).

Northern Shrike: Routine reports.

Bell's Vireo: Only about the 9th fall Panhandle report was of one along Wright's Gap Road, *Banner* 1 Sep (SM). Amazing numbers were found at RCSRA in Aug, best count 51 there 9 Aug (SM); 17 were there as late as 30 Aug (SM).

Yellow-throated Vireo: The six at WP 12 Sep (MW, RSt) was a good tally.

Cassin's Vireo: The fall migration limits were defined by singles in SBC 22 Aug (SM) and LM 20 Sep (JN) and at OR the same day (m. ob.). There were about 12 reported, east to LM, *Keith* (above) and *Dundy*, where one was found 6 Sep (ER, BS). The latter two are only the 8th and 9th records in all east of the Panhandle.

Blue-headed Vireo: Record fall counts were the amazing 15 at WP 12 Sep (MW, RSt) and eight at Ta-ha-zouka Park, *Madison* 10 Sep (JTh). One in *Sarpy* 23 Oct (MC) was tardy. Rare westerly were singles at RCSRA 7 Sep (JN) and 26 Sep (SM); even in central Nebraska, records are few, but of about 15 records in *Buffalo* and westward to *Keith*, nine are in 2019 and 2020.

Plumbeous Vireo: Only the 3rd and 4th records east of the Panhandle, albeit close, were singles at RCSRA 30 Aug (SM) and 7 Sep (JN).

Philadelphia Vireo: Only the 7th Panhandle record was one in *Garden* 4 Sep (SM, photo).

Warbling Vireo: Late for the westerly location was one in *Scotts Bluff* 19 Sep (SM). Rarely reported, single "Western" Warbling Vireos (subspecies *Vireo gilvus brewsteri*) were at Red Cloud Campground, *Dawes* 1 Sep (SBn, OD) and at Potter, *Cheyenne* 31 Aug (SM); at least the latter would have been a migrant. "Eastern" Warbling Vireo is fairly common in the Panhandle; about 30 identified as this subspecies were in *Garden, Keith, Chase,* and *Dundy* (SM, SMa).

Red-eyed Vireo: Routine reports.

Pinyon Jay: As many as 28 were attending the Connie Hoffman feeders in *Morrill* 21 Sep-27 Nov (KD, m. ob.). The only other reports were of one in Smiley Canyon, *Sioux* 2 Oct (CP) and another at Gilbert-Baker WMA, *Sioux* 29 Nov (PR).

Steller's Jay: One was well-described and heard at RCSRA 26 Sep (fide SM).

Blue Jay: Routine reports.

Clark's Nutcracker: Video was taken of six near Old Stage Hill Road, *Scotts Bluff* 2 Oct (CCf).

Black-billed Magpie: There were numerous reports from expected western locations, with best counts 26 in the LO area 24 Oct (CC, BE, WB), 18 near Dalton, *Morrill* 27 Nov (JN), and nine in *Furnas* 11 Aug (NW). Encouraging easterly reports included one in *Madison* 22 Oct (JTh) where a small population persists, and unexpected reports of one in *Boyd* 14 Sep (JC), two in *Dakota* 25 Oct (BFH), and one in an "oak savanna" in *Thayer* 21 Sep (GS).

American Crow: Large flocks are scarce westward, and so the 850 in *Lincoln* 22 Nov (SMa) was somewhat unexpected.

Horned Lark: Routine reports.

Bank Swallow: Lingering late at a colony at Fort Niobrara NWR, *Cherry* were five on 6 Oct (TAn).

Tree Swallow: The 1000 at CLNWR 6 Sep (FS, LP) was an excellent count.

Violet-green Swallow: On the tardy side were three at both SBC 31 Aug (MW) and near Harrison, *Sioux* 1 Sep (MW), and one at CLNWR 2 Sep (SM). Another at CLNWR 19 Aug (MSh) was an on-time migrant; the two CLNWR reports are at the east edge of the expected fall migration corridor.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow: Routine reports.

Purple Martin: An impressive non-roost aggregation was the 1000+ at LSWNP 16 Aug-2 Sep (m. ob.); best count was 2780 on 24 Aug (LS). Westernmost were singles at a colony in Benkelman, *Dundy* 9 and 29 Aug (SM) and two at Fort Niobrara NWR, *Cherry* 8 Aug (DLo, JTh).

Barn Swallow: Routine reports.

Cliff Swallow: Fourth-latest on record were the six in *Cedar* 21 Oct (SB). Such late buff-rumped swallows (any in Oct) should be studied to eliminate the possibility of Cave Swallow, which has recently shown a propensity to disperse considerable distances northward in late fall.

Black-capped Chickadee: The 23 in SBC 22 Aug (SM) was a good tally.

Mountain Chickadee: It is shaping up to be a good fall and winter for this species. There were at least 17 reported from about eight locations in *Scotts Bluff, Banner, Kimball,* and *Lincoln*, beginning with nine near Pine Bluffs in *Kimball* 18 Oct (ER, MW). The *Lincoln* records are of one at Cody Park 18 Nov through the period (SM, BE, m. ob.).

Tufted Titmouse: This species continues its tenuous existence in *Lancaster*; 1-2 were in Lincoln yards 11 Oct through the period (JGJ), 17-18 Oct (PCC) and 20 Oct (MU). Even in *Sarpy*, sightings are highly erratic; Phil Swanson noted, "I have lived at my house in Papillion for 40 years and yesterday afternoon I had my first ever Tufted Titmouse in the yard", and in *Douglas*, Kathleen Crawford-Rose noted "We have not had one in our yard for several years now".

Red-breasted Nuthatch: Reports were statewide through the period, but only the Panhandle hosted more than single-digit numbers; best count was the 29 in both Carter Canyon, *Scotts Bluff* 6 Oct (SM) and Wright's Gap Road, *Banner* 30 Nov (SM).

White-breasted Nuthatch: The "Interior West" subspecies *Sitta carolinensis nelsoni* breeds on the Pine Ridge, and evidence is accumulating for some southward movement in fall, beginning at the end of Aug but mostly in Sep; one identified by the distinctive call was at WHNC 25 Aug (SM). Others were singles in *Kimball* 15 Oct (SM) and Carter Canyon, *Scotts Bluff* 20 and 30 Nov (SM).

Pygmy Nuthatch: A record fall tally was the 50 in "many groups of multiple birds" in SBC during a 5-hour, 2.5-mile walk (MW). A surprising but not unprecedented example of this species' occasional tendency to wander in fall was a group of eight in limber pines near Pine Bluffs in *Kimball* 18 Oct (ER, MW); they may have moved south from the Pine Ridge or the Wildcat Hills in *Scotts Bluff/Banner*, or eastward from Wyoming.

Brown Creeper: Routine reports.

Rock Wren: Routine reports.

House Wren: Record fall counts were the 48 at RCSRA 9 Aug (SM) and 44 in southeast *Garden* 4 Sep along Road 44 (SM).

Winter Wren: Good fall tallies were the three in Parks, *Dundy* 10 Oct (DT) and four in southeast *Washington* 12 Oct (SBr). Prior to this fall, there had been fewer than 15 reports from the west and west-central, but this year there were 11, clustered in *Scotts Bluff*, *Keith*, and *Dundy* (m. ob.). Westerly reports have increased in recent years, and this may be a continuation of that trend, enhanced by increased excellent coverage by several observers.

Sedge Wren: Apparently the first Panhandle report for fall was one heard (and whose calls were carefully described) along Road 44 in southeast *Garden* 7 Aug (SM). Also westerly was one in *Hayes* 8 Oct (WF); these reports are only the 6th and 7th in fall in the western half of the state.

Marsh Wren: One of the western subspecies *Cistothorus palustris plesius* in *Adams* 28 Aug (WF) was somewhat easterly.

Carolina Wren: The widespread dispersal in fall 2019 was followed by a similar event in 2020. Westerly, 1-2 were reported in *Keith, Lincoln, Hitchcock*, and *Dawson* 9 Aug-25 Nov (SM, WB, AH, SP). Northerly, 1-2 were at seven sites in *Knox* and *Cedar* 8 Aug-28 Oct (MB, EB, LB) and singles were in northern *Dixon* 8 Aug (SMa) and southwestern *Dixon* 24 Sep, the observer's "2nd ever" (JJ), *Madison* 24 Sep (JTh), and *Wayne* 14 Oct (MB). A good count was the eight at FF 25 Sep (BT, LW).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: One at LM 2 Oct (SM) was tardy.

Golden-crowned Kinglet: One at RCSRA 26 Sep (SM) was a bit early.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet: Routine reports.

Eastern Bluebird: Routine reports.

Mountain Bluebird: Departure from the breeding range begins in late Aug; 21 were near Exit 1 on I-80, *Kimball* 15 Aug (SM). Bordering on annual in the east, arrival is in late Oct; this fall reports were on 24 Oct at BOL (MW), 28 Oct in *Hall* (CC), and 3 Nov (3) in *Phelps* (AF).

Townsend's Solitaire: Record early by 2-3 weeks was one at LM 7 Aug (SM, recording).

Veery: One in *Douglas* 25 Sep (SBr, JL, JR) was a rare and rather late fall sighting. No others were reported.

Gray-cheeked Thrush: Like Veery, rarely reported in fall, the only sighting was of one in *Lancaster* 8 Sep (SBn, OD).

Swainson's Thrush: One was late in Lincoln, *Lancaster* 26 Oct (MV).

Hermit Thrush: One at RCSRA 29 Aug (SM) was early. Photographs of fall migrant Hermit Thrushes in and near the Panhandle are revealing that most are either the gray early-migrating Rocky Mountain breeding subspecies *Catharus guttatus auduboni,* or the smaller, browner subspecies *C. g. guttatus*, which breeds in the Pacific Northwest. Subspecies *C. g. faxoni*, common in eastern Nebraska, is quite rare as far west as the Panhandle. A good count of six *C. g. auduboni* were in Carter Canyon, *Scotts Bluff* 6 Oct (SM, photos. Four *C. g. guttatus* were reported, one at LM 2 Oct (SM photo), two in *Scotts Bluff* 6 Oct (SM photos), and one banded at CSP 9 Oct (RSn).

Wood Thrush: One in Lincoln, *Lancaster* 8 Oct (MV) was 4th-latest on record.

American Robin: Routine reports.

Gray Catbird: One at FF 14 Nov (SBr, JL, JR) was tardy, but singles at each of two *Lincoln* locations 27 Nov (SM) were record late for western and central Nebraska.

Brown Thrasher: Good counts at opposite ends of the state were 20 along Road 44 in southeast *Garden* 4 Sep (SM) and 21 at LSWNP 24 Sep (LS).

Sage Thrasher: A record-breaking number by far were reported this fall, a total of about 59, including remarkable counts of up to 19 at Montz Point WMA access, Stegall Road, *Scotts Bluff* 15-16 Aug (SM, BE, KD). The 19 or so reports were all in the western Panhandle except for only the 2nd fall record east of the Panhandle, one in *Dundy* 30 Aug (SM, SBa).

Northern Mockingbird: Rare in the north, the two records were of singles at Cody, *Cherry* 17 Sep (WF) and Gordon, *Sheridan* 29 Aug (D&MW).

European Starling: Routine reports.

Bohemian Waxwing: The only report was of one heard several times in *Burt* 25 Nov (SMa); the calls were described in convincing detail by an experienced observer.

Cedar Waxwing: Routine reports.

House Sparrow: An excellent non-CBC tally was the 400 at Bushnell, *Kimball* 22 Nov (SM, CW).

American Pipit: One at OR 31 Aug (SM) was early, and singles at SR 27 Nov (SM) and LNB 28 Nov (BE, CC) were late.

Sprague's Pipit: Three at Prairie Dog WPA, *Kearney* 12 Sep (JN) were early.

Evening Grosbeak: The only reports were of one at a feeder near Long Pine, *Rock* 6 Aug (AD, JC), only the 4th record overall for Aug, and two at WHNC 26 Oct (SM, DE).

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch: The four reports were all along Toadstool Road; best counts were 110 on 28 Nov only a few yards into *Dawes* near Sand Creek Road (PR), and 55 at Toadstool Park, *Sioux* 21 Nov (ND). Two "Hepburn's" were reported with the flock of 110 in *Dawes* (PR). The other report was of 21 at a Ranch near Sand Creek Road, *Sioux* 28 Nov (PR).

House Finch: Good non-CBC tallies were the 120 at WHNC 26 Oct (SM, DE) and 82 at Wyuka Cemetery, *Lancaster* 3 Oct (LE).

Purple Finch: Early arrivals were one in *Douglas* 12 Sep (SMa), two in *Cedar* 17 Sep (MB), and one in *Sarpy* 30 Sep (L&BP). Rare in the Panhandle, reports were of singles at three *Scotts Bluff* locations 20-29 Nov (SM, KD) and of two at OR 22 Nov (SM). Numbers were generally low with all reports in single digits except for the 12 at FF 17 Oct (BW, SBr).

Cassin's Finch: Good numbers appeared in the western Panhandle; best counts were the 26 at Exit 1 on I-80, *Kimball* 18 Oct (ER, MW) and 16 at WHNC 26 Oct (SM, DE). Reports from WHNC were 10 Oct through the period (m. ob.). Elsewhere, easterly were a pair at the Clark feeders in *Lincoln* 14 Nov (VC photo). In *Scotts Bluff*, two were along Old Stage Hill Road 20 Nov (SM), one was in Carter Canyon 20 Nov (SM), and two were at Bushnell, *Kimball* 22 Nov (SM, CW).

Common Redpoll: This was a down year with only three individuals reported: 1-2 at a Creighton, *Knox* feeder 13-17 Nov (MB), and, far to the southwest where rare even in a good year, one at RCSRA 16 Nov (SM).

Red Crossbill: Strangely, during the period none reached the east and the only reports east of the Panhandle were of one near Valentine, *Cherry* 4 Sep (LB, EB, MB) and four at RCSRA 16 Nov (SM). Numerous reports were concentrated on the Pine Ridge and in *Scotts Bluff*. Best count in *Scotts Bluff* was 55 at WHNC 13 Sep (SM); 42 were banded there 26-29 Aug by BCR (VM). On the Pine Ridge, best

count was 18 in SBC 1 Sep (MW) and 6 Sep (SMa); 11 were banded by BCR at CSP 9 Sep (RSn).

White-winged Crossbill: Most records are from eastern Nebraska, and so a male at WHNC 22 Nov was a surprise (SM, CW, KD). In the east, three females were at Tekamah Cemetery, *Burt* 28 Nov (SMa). A female was at Mahoney Park, Lincoln, *Lancaster* 27 Nov (CV) and another in Wyuka Cemetery, *Lancaster* the next day may have been the same female (MW).

Pine Siskin: Reports were numerous and statewide, although the only counts above 25 outside the Panhandle were 160 at LM 2 Oct (SM) and 33 at RCSRA 16 Nov (SM). On the other hand, huge numbers were at WHNC, peaking at 470 on 20 Nov, 430 of these counted in a single binocular sweep with 40 more thrown in as heard only during the sweep (SM). BRC banded 495 in all during the fall season 26 Aug-9 Oct (VM). Best counts in the east were 20 in *Cass* 5 Nov (JBr) and 17 in *Otoe* 29 Nov (SQ).

Lesser Goldfinch: Good numbers were reported, almost all at or near WHNC in *Scotts Bluff* and at Exit 1 on I-80 in *Kimball*. Best counts were at Exit 1, 20 estimated 29 Aug (NP, WA) and 18 counted 1 Sep (MW). Around WHNC, best count was 11 on Old Stage Hill Road 25 Aug (SM). The only reports elsewhere were of one easterly at CLNWR 2 Sep (SM) and one in *Cheyenne* 31 Aug (SM). One along Old Stage Hill Road 24 Oct (KD) was late.

American Goldfinch: A female with two early fledglings was at CSP 2 Sep (RSn).

Lapland Longspur: One in *Platte* 3 Oct was early (RF photo).

Chestnut-collared Longspur: Routine reports.

Smith's Longspur: The two reports were from Bobcat Prairie, *Lancaster*: four on 28 Oct (SBn, OD) and one on 1 Oct (JSS).

Thick-billed Longspur: Routine reports.

Snow Bunting: One at OR 15 Oct (SM) was early. There were only four reports in all, total only five birds, oddly all southwesterly in *Kimball*, *Deuel*, and *Lincoln* (SM, CW, JLt).

Cassin's Sparrow: This species departs early in fall, mostly in Aug, and so two Sep reports were the first on record for that onth: one was flushed along Summit Ranch Road, *Scotts Bluff* 5 Sep (SMa photo) near Stegall Road, where singles were reported 15 Aug (SM) and 16 Aug (KD). The other Sep report was 1 Sep along Wright's Gap Road, *Banner* (SM). A family group of four was near Lake Alice, *Scotts Bluff* 25 Aug (SM photos), and one was at Exit 1 on I-80, *Kimball* 15 Aug (SM).

Grasshopper Sparrow: Routine reports.

Lark Sparrow: Routine reports.

Lark Bunting: Routine reports.

Chipping Sparrow: One in *Nuckolls* 26 Nov (DE photo) was late.

Clay-colored Sparrow: Routine reports.

Field Sparrow: Two at LSWNP 27 Nov (LS) were tardy. The 61 at RCSRA 26 Sep (SM) was a good count; all "looked like the western race" and the observer (SM) was "astonished" by the number. Until 2000 there were fewer than 30 Panhandle records in all, apparently most if not all of the gray-faced western subspecies, but since then numbers in the west have increased. Along with the *Dundy* count of 61, there were about 21 additional Panhandle records this fall (m. ob.).

Brewer's Sparrow: An astonishing record was of one at MWCW 26-27 Sep (MW, SK; photos). There are no previous records east of *Lincoln* except for an old specimen taken in *Brown* in 1919. Also easterly but not as spectacularly so were two at RCSRA 29 Aug (SM) and one there 26 Sep (SM).

This Brewer's Sparrow, only the second record for the eastern two-thirds of Nebraska, and the first in 101 years, was at Marsh Wren Community Wetlands, *Lancaster* 26-27 Sep, here photographed by Steve Kruse 27 Sep.

Fox Sparrow: Less than annual in the west and west central, there were two reports, singles at Lake Minatare, *Scotts Bluff* 4-10 Oct (KD) and at RCSRA 9 Oct (WF).

American Tree Sparrow: Routine reports.

Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco: One at East Ash Creek, *Dawes* 31 Aug (SBn, OD) was early, and a good count was the 200 at RCSRA 17 Oct (MW). One in a *Sarpy* yard 24 Oct had a bright, complete white eye-ring (PS photo).

Dark-eyed (Cassiar) Junco: One at RCSRA 10 Oct (DT) was early. There were eight reported statewide.

Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco: Excellent counts were a record 70 at RCSRA 16 Nov (SM), and 50 near Lisco, *Garden* 18 Oct (KN), a good count for the rather early date. Early for the Panhandle was one banded by BCR at WHNC 12 Sep (VM), and early in the east were singles in *Merrick* 8 Oct (SMo), *Pierce* 17 Oct (EWe, SW) and *Douglas* 18 Oct (EWe).

Dark-eyed (Pink-sided) Junco: Documentation of unusual juncos in the east is improving; diagnostic photographs identified a Pink-sided present in a *Sarpy* yard 16 Oct through the period (PS) and one at Pioneers Park, *Lancaster* 28 Nov (MW). Also easterly were singles in *Lancaster* 10 Nov (LE) and 28 Nov (MW). The 25 along Old Stage Hill Road, *Scotts Bluff* 26 Oct (SM, DE) was a good tally.

Dark-eyed (White-winged) Junco: A good tally was the 19 in Carter Canyon, *Scotts* Bluff 20 Nov (SM, DE).

White-crowned Sparrow: Unless noted, reports here are of the most numerous subspecies occurring in the state, pale-lored *Zonotrichia leucophrys gambelii*. One was early in *Kimball* 30 Aug (SM), and a record fall count was the 255 along Road 44, southeast *Garden* 2 Oct (SM). The only dark-lored birds reported were two *Z. l. leucophrys* in *Sarpy* 21 Oct (SMa); this is the expected dark-lored subspecies in the east.

Harris's Sparrow: Routine reports.

White-throated Sparrow: In the Panhandle, where less than annual in winter, the 13 reports showed fall migrants passed through 19 Sep-2 Nov (m. ob.).

Vesper Sparrow: Routine reports.

LeConte's Sparrow: One was early at LSWNP 13 Sep (LS) and another was late at N. P. Dodge Park, *Douglas* 30 Nov (SMa).

Nelson's Sparrow: One in *Fillmore* 27 Nov (CS) was very late; there are three other Nebraska dates, all in early Nov. Another, at LSWNP 24 Oct (LE) was late, but in the range of expected last dates.

Henslow's Sparrow: The only report was of one continuing near Pishelville, *Knox* 9 Aug (SMa), previously discovered 29 Jul (MB. EB, LB) and northernmost for the state.

Savannah Sparrow: Five at Father Hupp WMA, *Thayer* 27 Nov (CS) were late.

Song Sparrow: There were several excellent counts: 75 at RCSRA 17 Oct (MW), 61 at Kramper Lake, *Dakota* 16 Oct (JCd), and 50 at N. P. Dodge Park, *Douglas* 30 Nov (SMa). A brightly-colored bird photographed at SR, *Lincoln* 21 Nov was identified as subspecies *Melospiza melodia montana* (SMa), a Rocky Mountain breeder that migrates through eastern Colorado and likely western Nebraska in low numbers. The identification was confirmed by Steven Mlodinow and is the first record with tangible documentation for Nebraska, although there are a few convincing sight records.

Lincoln's Sparrow: Two observers at different times 22 Aug in SBC found two (SM) and one (KD) early arrivals. A good tally was the 60 at SCP 12 Oct (MW); 46 were counted at LSWNP the same day (LE).

Swamp Sparrow: Routine reports.

Green-tailed Towhee: The three reports were of rather tardy birds, notably one at RCSRA 17 Oct (MW, photo). Others were two at OR 21 Sep (MSh) and another at RCSRA 27 Sep (SM).

Spotted Towhee: The 33 at RCSRA 26 Sep, most appearing to be of the resident subspecies *Pipilo maculatus arcticus* (SM), was a good tally. Early in the southeast were singles at different *Lancaster* locations 17 Sep (SBn) and 19 Sep (LS).

Spotted/Eastern Towhee (not identified to species**) and Spotted x Eastern Towhee (**eBird defines as hybrid or intergrade**)**: Observers are reporting these eBird options, which are recommended anywhere in Nebraska unless photos and/or recordings can safely identify phenotypically "pure" individuals to species.

Eastern Towhee: Westerly was one in *Rock* 3 Oct (JC). One lingered until 29 Oct in a *Sarpy* yard (KCR).

Yellow-breasted Chat: One at LSWNP 12 Sep (LS) was easterly; photos showed its white sub-moustachial line extended posteriorly past the eye, indicating a migrant of the western subspecies, as expected.

Yellow-headed Blackbird: One in *Scotts Bluff* 22 Nov (KD) was tardy.

Bobolink: Routine reports.

Eastern Meadowlark: Last reported singing birds were at MWCW 17 and 19 Nov (TG, CV). Status of this species after singing ceases is uncertain, and so observers are encouraged to photograph or record possible Easterns after Mid-Nov.

Western Meadowlark: Routine reports.

Orchard Oriole: Routine reports.

Bullock's Oriole: Surprising were two easterly reports of this species. Most such records are also tardy; a first fall male was in *Lancaster* 11 Sep (SBn, JGJ), and another was quite late at a *Sarpy* feeder 10 Nov (CWi fide JGJ). Photos of the latter bird raise the possibility it was an intergrade.

Baltimore Oriole: A male in a *Sarpy* yard 7 Nov (AC) was very late, about the 10th record overall for Nov. Also tardy were singles in a Lincoln, *Lancaster* yard 10 Oct (RR) and at MWCW 16 Oct (BN). Tardy in the Panhandle was one at Clear Creek WMA, *Keith* 4 Sep (BWh).

Red-winged Blackbird: The 21,000 along Road 44, southeastern *Garden* 18 Nov (SM) was a good fall tally.

Brown-headed Cowbird: Routine reports.

Rusty Blackbird: Rare in the Panhandle, singles were at Lake Minatare, *Scotts Bluff* 10 Oct (JN photo) and at OR 26 Oct (SM, DE).

Brewer's Blackbird: Routine reports.

Common Grackle: Routine reports.

Great-tailed Grackle: A good count was the 250 at Cozad, *Dawson* 22 Oct (RSk).

Ovenbird: Routine reports.

Louisiana Waterthrush: One, a possible juvenile, was tardy at ICSP 4 Sep (JR, SBr).

Northern Waterthrush: The migration period limits were defined by one early in *Buffalo* 11 Aug (BB) and tardy singles in *Douglas* 26 Sep (SS) and at WP 27 Sep (DL).

Golden-winged Warbler: Less than annual in fall, with fewer than 40 records in all, there were three reports, all tardy: one was at WP 11 Sep (LE), two at a different WP location 12 Sep (RSt, MW), and one in *Douglas* 14 Sep (EN).

Black-and-white Warbler: Routine reports.

Tennessee Warbler: Routine reports.

Orange-crowned Warbler: There were four early reports from *Douglas* and *Lancaster* 28 Aug-2 Sep, none well-documented; such sightings may be of Tennessee Warbler, more likely in Aug than Orange-crowned.

Nashville Warbler: Adding to the previous 23 Panhandle records were singles at Gering Cemetery, *Scotts Bluff* 25 Aug (SM) and at OR 19 Sep (SM).

Connecticut Warbler: The only report was also the first on record for the Panhandle; one at Ash Hollow SHP, *Garden* 2 Sep was well-described (SM).

MacGillivray's Warbler: At the east edge of the expected migration corridor were singles at Gordon, *Sheridan* 20 Sep (D&MW), and 2 at RCSRA 6 Sep (ER, BS).

Mourning Warbler: Only the 6th documented record for the central and west was one photographed at RCSRA 29 Aug (SM). Apparently 2nd-earliest on record for fall was one in a *Sarpy* yard 17 Aug (PS photo).

This Mourning Warbler was in a *Sarpy* yard 17 Aug, photographed by Phil Swanson. It is the second-earliest on record for fall

Kentucky Warbler: Routine reports.

Common Yellowthroat: A record fall tally was the 46 along Road 44, southeastern *Garden* 4 Sep (SM).

Hooded Warbler: One at FF 4-6 Sep (EWe, MC, BW) was only the 8th fall record for the state.

American Redstart: Singles were early at RCSRA 9 Aug (SM) and in *Adams* 10 Aug (KMc).

Northern Parula: One in *Cedar* 2 Oct (MB) was tardy.

Magnolia Warbler: Routine reports.

Bay-breasted Warbler: Routine reports.

Blackburnian Warbler: The 13th Panhandle record was one along Old Stage Hill Road, *Scotts Bluff* 13 Sep (SM). Also far westerly was one at LM 3 Sep (SM).

Yellow Warbler: A record fall high count was the 71 at RCSRA 9 Aug (SM).

Chestnut-sided Warbler: A hatch year bird at Wyuka Cemetery, *Lancaster* 14 Oct (RRo) was tardy.

Blackpoll Warbler: Unexpected in fall, with only nine previous documented records, there were a remarkable seven reports, all but one accompanied by diagnostic photographs (hint!) and the other well-described. Most remarkable was one at Gotte Park, *Kimball* 6 Sep (SMe), the 3rd Panhandle record. Elsewhere, one was at Mercer Woods, *Douglas* 9-10 Sep and possibly the same bird 12 Sep (JR), singles were at Holmes Lake, *Lancaster* 11 Sep (SK) and at WP the same day

(JGJ), in *Saunders* 12 Sep (JGJ, SMa), and in *Sarpy* 19 Sep (PS). Joe Gubanyi pointed out that on 8 Sep there was a strong weather system in the Eastern US producing westerly winds, a likely source of these unexpected numbers of Blackpoll Warblers..

Palm Warbler: Less than annual in the west in fall, one in *Morrill* 20 Sep (WF) was only the 11th such record for the Panhandle.

Pine Warbler: The only report was of an immature at a Palmyra, *Otoe* feeder 26 Nov (CNR fide JGJ).

Yellow-rumped (Myrtle) Warbler: Singles were at two different *Knox* sites 4 and 5 Nov (MB), late at those northerly locations.

Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler: There were four reports of tardy singles by the same observers at different Panhandle locations on the same day, 26 Oct: OR, Kimball, and Bushnell, all in *Kimball*, and WHNC, *Scotts Bluff* (SM, DE). A 5th tardy bird was at CLNWR 24 Oct (JN). One in *Lincoln* 9 Oct (VC photo) was a bit easterly, but one in *Lancaster* (EW photo) was only the 4th eastern fall record. The 24 at RCSRA 27 Sep (SM) was a good tally.

Yellow-rumped (Audubon's x Myrtle) Warbler: There were 14 reports in the west and west-central 19 Sep-16 Nov of birds with varying amounts of white on the throat and various combinations of throat color and presence or absence of a white supercilium (m. ob.); best count was six at RCSRA 27 Sep (SM).

Yellow-throated Warbler: The only report was of one in *Sarpy* 25 Aug (L&BP).

Townsend's Warbler: Easterly and late was one at Swanson Reservoir, *Hitchcock* 2 Oct (AH). Also easterly were 20 in all at RCSRA 6-26 Sep (BS, JN, SM) with a high count the nine on 6 Sep (ER).

Black-throated Green Warbler: One was early and westerly in *Scotts Bluff* 24 Aug (CD), only the 7th fall Panhandle record.

Canada Warbler: Routine reports.

Wilson's Warbler: The 84 at OR 31 Aug (SM) was a record fall count.

Summer Tanager: One in *Knox* 2 Oct (MB) was late, and even later was one at Springfield, *Sarpy* 23 Oct (CJW video, fide MB) 4th latest on record.

Scarlet Tanager: A female/immature at Valentine NWR, *Cherry* 14 Aug (KDu), a little west of the expected Niobrara River Valley summer range, may have been an early migrant.

Western Tanager: One in *Scotts Bluff* 6 Oct (SM) was tardy, and another was easterly at RCSRA 30 Aug (SM).

Northern Cardinal: Routine reports.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak: Only the 6th fall Panhandle record was a "young male" banded and photographed by BCR at WHNC 3 Sep (VM).

Black-headed Grosbeak: A first fall male was photographed four miles west of Bassett, *Rock* 6 Aug (AD, JC); photographs are useful for sightings within the hybrid zone.

Blue Grosbeak: One at BOL 6 Oct (LE) was tardy.

Lazuli Bunting: One in Scottsbluff, *Scotts Bluff* 30 Sep (CP) was tardy.

Indigo Bunting: Routine reports.

Dickcissel: Only three were reported from the Panhandle, indicating early departure and/or low numbers: singles were in Gordon, *Sheridan* 16 and 25 Aug (D&MW) and in *Scotts Bluff* 25 Aug (SM).

History of the Seward-Branched Oak Lake Christmas Bird Count, 1993-2020

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The Seward-Branched Oak Lake Christmas Bird Count (Seward-BOL CBC) began in 1993 and has been conducted every year since then except for 2010 for a total of 27 counts. Weather conditions prevented the count on the selected date in 2010 and a backup date could not be set up. The count was started for several reasons. The area west of Lincoln has a diversity of habitats including all or part of four public lakes (Branched Oak, Pawnee, Twin Lakes, and Meadowlark) as well as a diversity of terrestrial habitats on both public and private land. The circle is close to Lincoln, which has a large birding community from which to recruit volunteers to help on the count. It was also the intent to provide Seward residents who feed birds an opportunity to become involved. To accomplish these goals, the center of the 15-mile-diameter circle was located a half mile south and half mile east of Garland (Figure 1).

The map shows the circle divided into blocks which are assigned to people helping with the count. Including both field observers and feeder watchers, over 145 people have participated in one or more counts since the count started. To date, all counts have been done between December 14-20 (the first week of the count period). This has been intentional because lakes in the count circle are more likely to have open water with water-associated bird species present.

Audubon (https://www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count) requires that the following data be entered for a Christmas bird count: species observed including number tallied, number of parties and people in the field and at feeders, and time and miles in the field (divided into time and miles on foot and in vehicles; also included are 12 other modes of transportation not used on the Seward-BOL count). In addition, time and miles spent searching for owls and other nocturnal species before sunup/after sundown (categorized as nocturnal birding) is required and is not included in total field time. Count start time and end time are also required. The following weather-related data are requested: high and low temperatures, wind speed and direction, cloud cover, presence/absence of rain or snow, snow depth, lake and stream conditions (open, frozen or partly-open/partly-frozen). Birds not seen on the count day but seen within 3 days of the count are included in the final report. They are not included in total counts or number of species seen and are listed as count week species.

CBC data have been analyzed across wide geographical ranges and habitats. When comparing data from multiple counts, several problems with CBC data known to influence data analysis have been pointed out, including number of participants, hours in the field, nature of habitat, modes of travel, skill level of observers, and

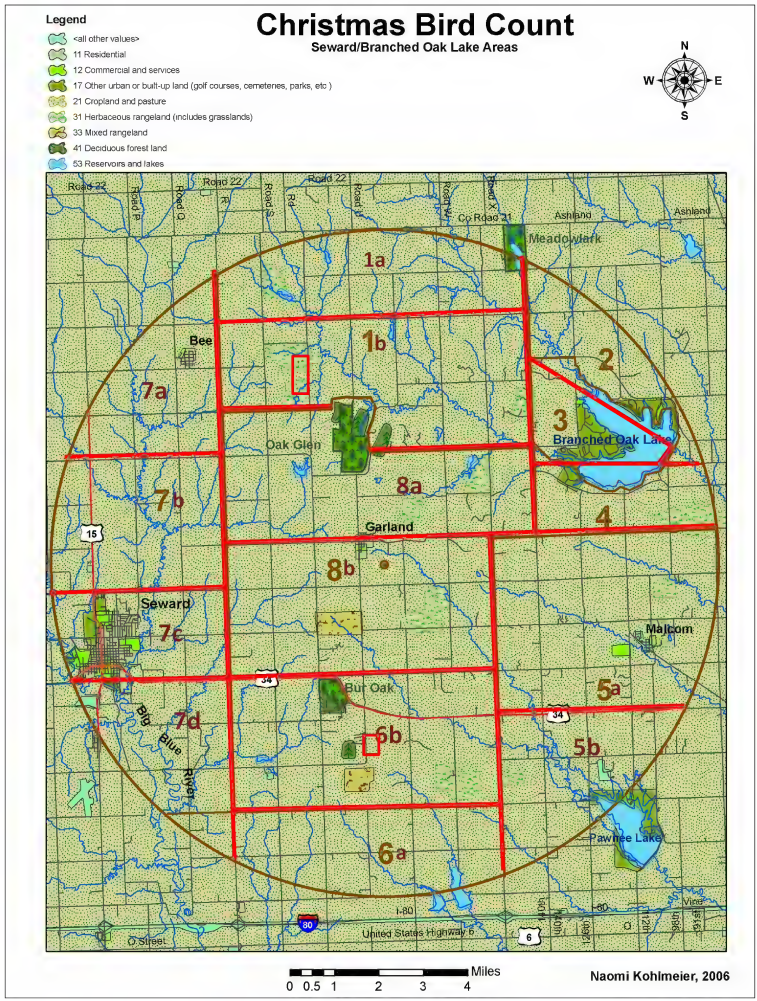


Figure 1. Map of Seward-Branched Oak Lake CBC circle. The circle is divided into blocks outlined in gray which are assigned volunteers. If observers see a noteworthy bird species while driving through another block, they typically make note of that to let the person assigned to that block or the compiler know so that the species is not counted twice. The two small rectangles outlined in light gray (in 1b and 6b) are on private property and require permission from owners to access the property.

climate and weather conditions, to mention a few (Dunn et al. 2005). Looking at a single count over time controls for some of these issues. A common approach in dealing with variation in observer hours is to convert count data to number seen/observer hour. The number of total observer hours per count on the Seward-BOL CBC ranged from 42.5 to 83.75 hours over the years. Species count data were converted to number/observer hour using Excel. Data were analyzed using the Pearson correlation coefficient (r) to look for patterns (linear relationships) over the 27 years of the count. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was also used to look for correlations between count data and temperature and for correlations between different species.

The 130 species seen on count day since the count began are listed in Table 1. Table 1 includes one additional bird, meadowlark species. Eastern and Western Meadowlarks can be difficult to differentiate in winter, and therefore meadowlarks are frequently tallied as meadowlark species. Although meadowlark species have been recorded on all 27 counts, Western Meadowlark has been documented on only 8 counts and Eastern Meadowlark on only one count.

Somewhat surprisingly, no significant correlation was found between temperature recorded on count day and any bird count data including number of species tallied, total number of individuals, or total counts for any individual species. The highest total count for all species was 46,620 in 2002 and the lowest total count was 5300 in 2016. The average number of birds seen per count is 12,799 while the median number of birds tallied is 11,452. The average is higher than the median because of three counts in which more than 40,000 birds were tallied skewing the average higher (The next highest was 21,842). The highest counts for an individual species on a count were 30,806 Snow Geese in 2002 and 30,672 Mallards in 1997 (Table 1). These numbers are exceptional given that only two other times in the history of the count did any species total exceed 10,000 (28,910 Snow Geese in 2001 and 10,118 Canada Geese in 1996). Twenty-six species have been seen on all 27 counts while 18 species have been seen on only one count (Table 1). One possible reason for species having occurred on only one count is that they are seasonally rare (i.e., Long-billed Dowitcher, Peregrine Falcon, Gray Catbird, Savannah Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Yellow-headed Blackbird, and Baltimore Oriole). Another possible reason would be species that are out of range (i.e., Greater Prairie Chicken, Northern Goshawk, White-winged Dove, Tufted Titmouse, and Pine Grosbeak). Three gull species (California, Iceland, and Glaucous) which have been regular on the Lake McConaughy CBC are likely less common at lakes in the Seward-BOL CBC circle due to lake sizes and lakes freezing over. Historical CBC records through 2019 can be accessed on the Audubon website (https://www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count), so several of the above species were checked to see how often they had been tallied on other Nebraska CBCs. Pine Grosbeak has been recorded on 7 counts in Nebraska from 1951-2019 suggesting it is a rare species for the region that occasionally shows up on counts. White-winged Dove has been recorded on 12 counts in Nebraska; the first time was in 2005, and then one was seen during count week at Scotts Bluff in 2009. The other 10 times were 2014-2019, supporting the view that White-winged Doves have been expanding their range north. Gray Catbird has been recorded on 5 counts in Nebraska (2002, 2009, 2016-2018). Given they were in relatively recent years, this may be due to milder winters because

Table 1. Species seen on Seward-Branched Oak Lake CBC Species list is organized by number of counts on which species were recorded. The second column is the number of counts on which the species was seen, the third column is the high count tallied for a species, and the fourth column is the average for the history of the count. The list includes only species recorded on the count day. Six additional species were recorded as count week only species. These species include Black Scoter (2020), Pectoral Sandpiper (2001), Common Loon (2020), Bohemian Waxwing (2000), LeConte's Sparrow (2020), and Brewer's Blackbird (1998). [Table continued on following page.]

Species	Counts	High	Avg	Species	Counts	High	Avg
Canada Goose	27	10118	1832	Song Sparrow	27	49	13.7
Mallard	27	30672	3137	Northern Cardinal	27	199	114
Sharp-shinned Hawk	27	11	4.5	Meadowlark species	27	302	65.7
Red-tailed Hawk	27	114	54.8	House Finch	27	188	80.3
Rock Pigeon	27	358	93.4	American Goldfinch	27	705	339.8
Red-bellied Woodpecker	27	88	47	House Sparrow	27	690	296.3
Downy Woodpecker	27	116	58.5	Northern Bobwhite	26	106	34.4
Hairy Woodpecker	27	23	13	Ring-necked Pheasant	26	110	20
Northern Flicker	27	129	66.2	Northern Harrier	26	30	10.3
American Kestrel	27	29	8.7	Bald Eagle	26	23	4.8
Northern Shrike	27	14	6.6	Rough-legged Hawk	26	17	4.2
Blue Jay	27	226	135.5	Great Horned Owl	26	22	8.5
American Crow	27	1273	488.9	Brown Creeper	26	18	7.8
Black-capped Chickadee	27	238	93	Red-winged Blackbird	26	5731	526.1
White-breasted Nuthatch	27	89	60	Mourning Dove	25	42	13.8
American Robin	27	6148	1037	Barred Owl	25	10	3
European Starling	27	3275	1085	Golden-crowned Kinglet	25	38	11.4
Cedar Waxwing	27	619	174.6	Eastern Bluebird	25	286	94.7
American Tree Sparrow	27	2216	684.6	Eastern Screech-Owl	24	11	3.5
Harris's Sparrow	27	212	67.6	Belted Kingfisher	24	10	2.5

Table 1. Species seen on Seward-Branched Oak CBC, continued.

Species	Counts	High	Avg	Species	Counts	High	Avg
Horned Lark	24	660	74	Rusty Blackbird	16	80	12.2
Red-breasted Nuthatch	24	28	7.3	Gadwall	15	157	10.8
Pine Siskin	24	552	42.4	Townsend's Solitaire	15	7	1.7
Common Merganser	22	1835	281.3	Spotted Towhee	15	12	1.7
Cooper's Hawk	22	6	2.6	Northern Pintail	14	18	3.3
Common Goldeneye	21	218	55.4	Hooded Merganser	14	24	5.9
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	21	6	1.2	Cackling Goose	13	261	40.4
Purple Finch	21	111	21.6	Green-winged Teal	13	102	7.3
Dark-eyed Junco (all races)	27	1611	709.3	Common Grackle	13	31	2.3
Ring-billed Gull	19	1395	205.3	American Wigeon	12	15	2.5
Herring Gull	19	103	27.3	Black-billed Magpie	11	25	2.6
Long-eared Owl	19	14	3.1	Lapland Longspur	11	97	10.4
Merlin	18	5	1.5	Brown-headed Cowbird	11	41	3.6
Carolina Wren	18	9	1.4	Lesser Scaup	10	47	4
White-crowned Sparrow	18	9	2.5	Ruddy Duck	10	40	2.7
Snow Goose	17	30806	2578	Greater White-fronted Goose	9	35	3.6
Wild Turkey	17	350	31.7	Ross's Goose	9	8	1.2
Yellow-rumped Warbler	17	51	9.3	American Coot	9	149	8.9
Fox Sparrow	17	17	3.5	Red-headed Woodpecker	9	7	0.9
White-throated Sparrow	17	34	3.7	Red-breasted Merganser	8	6	0.9
Great Blue Heron	16	7	1.5	Double-crested Cormorant	8	14	1.8
Eurasian Collared-Dove	16	145	17.6	Hermit Thrush	8	3	0.5
Winter Wren	16	7	1	Western Meadowlark	8	16	1.8

Table 1. Species seen on Seward-Branched Oak CBC, continued.

Species	Counts	High	Avg	Species	Counts	High	Avg
Northern Shoveler	7	104	6.8	Wilson's Snipe	2	4	0.2
Bufflehead	7	2	0.4	Bonaparte's Gull	2	2	0
Prairie Falcon	6	3	0.3	Lesser Black-backed Gull	2	1	0.1
Red Crossbill	6	91	5.5	Loggerhead Shrike	2	1	0.1
Canvasback	5	25	2.1	Greater Scaup	1	1	0
Redhead	5	8	0.7	Greater Prairie-Chicken	1	2	0.1
American White Pelican	5	3	0.3	Northern Goshawk	1	1	0
Killdeer	5	12	0.8	Long-billed Dowitcher	1	1	0
Pied-billed Grebe	4	4	0.3	California Gull	1	3	0.1
Short-eared Owl	4	2	0.2	Iceland Gull	1	1	0
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	4	1	0.2	Glaucous Gull	1	1	0
Field Sparrow	4	2	0.2	White-winged Dove	1	1	0
Eastern Towhee	4	4	0.3	Peregrine Falcon	1	1	0
Common Redpoll	4	35	1.5	Tufted Titmouse	1	1	0
Trumpeter Swan	3	4	0.4	Gray Catbird	1	1	0
Ring-necked Duck	3	15	0.7	Snow Bunting	1	7	0.3
Brown Thrasher	3	1	0.1	Savannah Sparrow	1	2	0.1
Northern Mockingbird	3	1	0.1	Lincoln's Sparrow	1	2	0.1
Swamp Sparrow	3	2	0.3	Eastern Meadowlark	1	1	0
Wood Duck	2	1	0.1	Yellow-headed Blackbird	1	2	0.1
White-winged Scoter	2	1	0	Baltimore Oriole	1	1	0
Horned Grebe	2	2	0.1	Pine Grosbeak	1	1	0
Red-shouldered Hawk	2	1	0.1				

of climate change. Baltimore Orioles had been recorded on only three counts in Nebraska (1971, 1979, 2014. Long-billed Dowitcher (seen in 1998) was the rarest of the one-count wonders on the Seward-BOL CBC, having occurred on no other CBCs in Nebraska. Long-billed Dowitchers have occurred on 3 counts in Kansas, 2 in Missouri, and 13 in Oklahoma. They regularly overwinter in southern Texas: (https://ebird.org/map/lobdow?bmo=12&emo=1&byr=1990&eyr=2021&env.minX=-97.996&env.minY=23.802&env.maxX=-88.807&env.maxY=30.925&gp=true).

Table 2 shows 10 species that increased on Seward-BOL CBC counts over the years. Several species might have increased due to range expansion, including Red-bellied Woodpecker, House Finch, Bald Eagle, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Barred Owl, and Cooper's Hawk (Johnsgard, Shane 2009; Silcock, Jorgensen 2020). Prior to 1970,

Table 2. Species with significant increases over count history. Based on Pearson correlation used to calculate the correlation between number per observation hour and year; r-values were considered significant if $r > |0.471|$ based on sample sizes n =27 and alpha = 0.01.

Species	Correlation (r-value)
Eastern Bluebird	0.857
Northern Flicker*	0.716
Red-bellied Woodpecker	0.672
House Finch	0.611
Bald Eagle	0.568
Eurasian Collared-Dove	0.547
Northern Cardinal	0.544
Barred Owl	0.530
White-breasted Nuthatch	0.509
Cooper's Hawk	0.474

*Northern Flicker includes all forms (red-shafted, yellow-shafted, and orange-shafted)

Eastern Bluebird populations declined due to competition from House Sparrows and European Starlings, which is well documented and led to conservation programs (https://abcbirds.org/bird/eastern-bluebird/). Since that time Eastern Bluebird populations have increased across much of their range, a trend which is supported by Seward-BOL CBC data. Interestingly, studies have shown that Eastern Bluebirds may be vulnerable to harsh winters (Sauer, JR, Droege S, 1990; Wetzel DP, Krupa JJ, 2013). Time will tell if the harsh Nebraska winter in 2020-2021 impacts Eastern Bluebird counts on Nebraska CBCs. Although Northern Cardinals increased on the Seward-BOL CBC, Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) data in Nebraska showed no change (Sauer et al. (2017), and Johnsgard and Shane (2009) found that CBC population trends varied across the Great Plains. Northern Flicker population trends varied in other studies as well. Sauer et al. (2017) found no change in BBS data, and Johnsgard and Shane (2009) stated that Northern Flickers increased in the Great Plains although BBS data showed declines nationally. White-breasted Nuthatch increases were

supported by data from Sauer et al. (2017) and Johnsgard and Shane (2009). Silcock and Jorgensen (2020) noted that eBird reports for White-breasted Nuthatches have been up in winter months.

Count data for two species that both increased, Red-bellied Woodpecker and Northern Flicker, were correlated with each other (r = 0.77; Figure 2). Downy Woodpecker and Hairy Woodpecker count data had slight decreases (not significant; r = -0.20 and r = -0.03, respectively), but were positively correlated with each other (r = 0.53). Research in the eastern U.S. has shown that woodpeckers and other bark foraging species populations increased due to the emerald ash borer invasion (Koenig et al. 2013). Koenig et al. found that Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and White-breasted Nuthatch all preyed on emerald ash borer with Red-bellied Woodpecker and White-breasted Nuthatch increasing significantly while Downy and Hairy Woodpecker populations fluctuated. Interestingly, population changes similar to these were seen in these four species on the Seward-BOL CBC. Ash borers were first detected in Nebraska in 2016 (https://neinvasives.com/species/insects/emerald-ash-borer) suggesting emerald ash borers were not the cause for the patterns in these four species seen on the Seward-BOL CBC.

Figure 2. Graph of Red-bellied Woodpecker and Northern Flicker count data over 27-year history of count showing strong correlation (r = 0.77) between the two species.

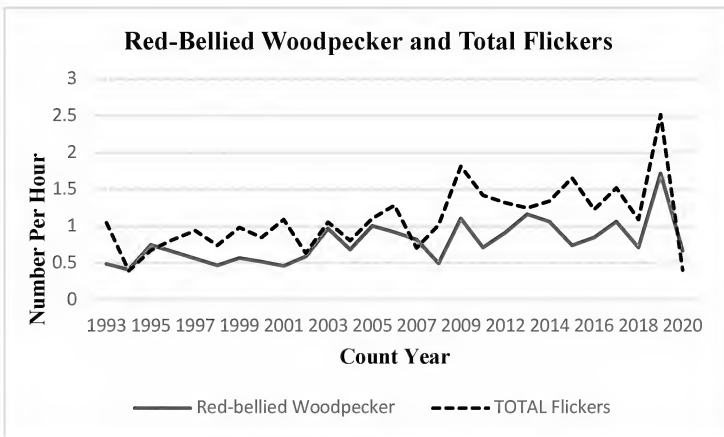


Table 3 shows 5 species with significant declines on Seward-BOL CBC counts. Four of the 5 species were likely impacted by West Nile virus (WNV). Black-billed Magpies were recorded on 12 of the first 15 counts with a high tally of 25 in 1993. The last magpie was recorded on the Seward-BOL CBC in 2007.

Table 3. Species with significant decreases over count history. Based on Pearson correlation which was used to calculate the correlation between number per observation hour and year; r-values were considered significant if r > |0.471| based on sample sizes n =27 and alpha = 0.01.

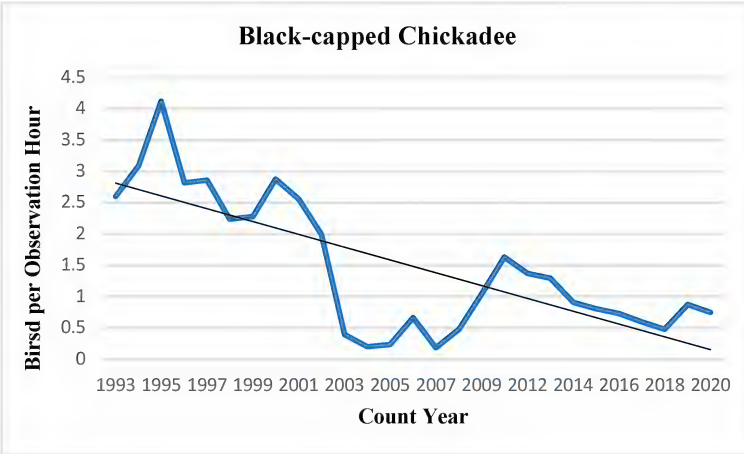
Species	Correlation (r-value)
Black-capped Chickadee	-0.730
American Crow	-0.677
Black-billed Magpie	-0.594
Eastern Screech-Owl*	-0.577
Northern Bobwhite**	-0.459

*Eastern Screech-Owl correlation was calculated using actual count data because Audubon does not include nocturnal observation hours when calculating birds per observation hour data

**Northern Bobwhite was included although it was not significant at alpha = 0.01; it was significant at alpha = 0.05

Black-billed Magpies have declined throughout much of Nebraska and it is a species of concern in the state. Silcock and Jorgensen (2020) provide an excellent discussion on Black-billed Magpies in Nebraska. It is not likely they will be seen again on the Seward-BOL CBC. American Crow and Black-capped Chickadee declines due to WNV are supported by research in the eastern U.S. (Bonter and Hochachka 2003; LaDeau et al. 2007). Black-capped Chickadees averaged 169 birds per count 1993-2002 never dropping below 122. In 2003, Black-capped Chickadees plummeted to 28 followed by 11 birds in 2004. They have not been above 100 since the downfall although they came close in 2011 at 99 birds. Figure 3 shows Black-capped Chickadee numbers on the count with a sharp drop in 2002-03, a gradual recovery from 2007-2011, and then another drop in 2012. This data parallels WNV human cases in the U.S. reported by the CDC (Roehrig 2013). Silcock and Jorgensen (2020) provide an excellent discussion on Black-capped Chickadee population declines in Nebraska based on CBC data. As a nocturnal species, Eastern Screech-Owl populations are more challenging to assess, and there are few data showing population declines in the Midwest. Neither Sauer et al. (2017) nor Johnsgard and Shane (2009) found changes in Eastern Screech-Owl populations. In BONO, Silcock and Jorgensen (2020) share the following comment regarding Eastern Screech-Owl populations made by Wayne Mollhoff: "And as to numbers, they took a big hit, along with many other species, when West Nile Virus hit us about 15 years ago. Their losses were much greater than the Great Horned Owls, which were more often found sick simply because they are so much more noticeable". Studies have shown that Northern Bobwhite declines were due to habitat loss and pesticide use (American Bird Conservancy 2017). Nebraska Game and Parks data showed that Northern Bobwhite populations declined statewide and in 5 of 6 regions from 2015-2019 (http://outdoornebraska.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Upland-Outlook-2020.Final_.pdf). Since Northern Bobwhite is an upland game species, Nebraska Game and Parks monitors and manages its populations and habitat and have been taking necessary measures to ensure a stable population.

Figure 3. Black-capped Chickadee CBC data for 27-year history of count. This data correlates well to peaks in West Nile virus bird deaths and human infections in 2002 and 2012. The dashed line is a trendline showing the overall decline during the period.



In conclusion, analyzing CBC data from a single count over 27 years turned out to be a challenging but informative task. There is always a sense that there is more to see and find if you look at the data a little more. For the most part, species that increased and species that decreased during the count history were consistent with data from other studies. In some cases, analyzing the data raises more questions than answers. For example, it is not clear why Red-Bellied Woodpeckers and Northern Flickers both increased and were correlated with each other, but neither Downy Woodpeckers nor Hairy Woodpeckers increased although they were correlated with each other. Eastern Screech-Owl is another species that has declined and could be studied to better understand possible population changes. I encourage other Nebraska CBC birdwatchers to analyze their data and see what the data reveals.

Acknowledgments

The Seward-BOL CBC would not be successful without the help of many people over the years. With 145+ people having covered blocks in the field and/or watched feeders, it is not possible to list all who have helped. In the early years several people including Larry Einemann, Tom Labedz, and Russ Benedict played an important part finding birding hot spots in their blocks that continue to be productive today. Gene Brott and Mary Ann Steinbeck played an important role in recruiting and coordinating feeder watchers in Seward. Larry Einemann has participated in every count since the beginning and has found a number of excellent birds. Most memorable to me was a Pine Grosbeak in 2004. Christmas Bird Counts are more successful when people can cover the same territories for multiple years. The following people have covered blocks on the Seward-BOL CBC for 10 or more years: Tom Labedz, Joel

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